The Gospel of Life According to Jesus

Nov. 14, 1953

The Gospel of Life According to Jesus.

Jn.10:10 I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.

INTRO. The background of a picture often gives the key to its interpretation. The setting of our text largely determines our exposition of it this a.m.

Seemingly Jesus did'nt prepare sermons. He allowed the incidents of each day to prompt him to say the necessary thing. Practically all of his great utterances of truth were prompted by the opportunity and demand of the moment.

Now for the incident which prompted Jesus to exclaim, "I have come that they might have life and have it to the full."

The healing of the man born blind.

A Jew reduced to beggary by blindness.

His Church accepted him as a Jew but treated him as a victim of sin and as a beggar.

His case caused the disciples to ask, "Did he sin or his parents that he should be born blind?

Then one day Jesus met him and restored his sight. With sight restored and outlook enlarged, the beggar became a new man. So much so that many who had known him did'nt recognize him as the same man.

Curiously enough the new man at once came into conflict with the church leaders.

He was healed on the Sabbath, contrary to their law.

He was healed by Jesus whom they refused to recognize as a man of God.

Instead of being glad that the beggar was given his sight, they cast him out. Better a man blind and submissive to the institution rather than a man seeing and challenging the institution.

Institutions are like that. They tend to make people uniform and conform to them. This man was not uniform and did not conform to institutional requirement, so he was excommunicated-thrown out.

Not only so, but the man Jesus who made the blind to see was also challenged. The men in authority in the name of God, instead of rejoicing over this man's good fortune, actually condemned the act of healing

In his indignation and under the spur of the moment Jesus told them the parable of the Good Shepherd in which he stressed the fact that the sheep's only need was not a fold. It is as necessary for the sheep to go out and find good pasture as it is for them to come in and find security. He called himself the Good Shepherd and the Door or Gate of the sheepfold. In him we find not only security from all harm but in him and thru him we can go out and find pasture for our souls, in short we can grow in mind and heart and soul into the living beings God intended we should be. They who would merely shut the sheep up in the fold to keep them secure and not allow them to go out and find pasture are thieves and robbers. He is the Faithful Shepherd leading his sheep to pastures green and ever willing to risk and sacrifice his own life for their sakes. Then it was that Jesus expressed himself in the words of the text- "I have come that they may have life and that they may have it to the full."

I. Jesus nearly always spoke of his mission and message in terms of Life.

"The words that I speak unto you they are spirit and the they are life."

Not dry arguments nor vain philosophical reasoning but but life- his own life, the life of the Eternal.

His bitterest lament on one occasion was, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

He never spoke of death, tho he lived under its shadow and knew how tragically he had to die. He only spoke of it as a happening that was inevitable. But death itself he never admitted. He lived in terms of eternity and asked his followers also so to live. "He that heareth my words and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

For Jesus God was Life. "He is not the God of the dead, he is the God of the living." There is no death in all the universe. There is what we call mortality, there is what we call matter, but in the mind of Jesus it was all part of the overflowing life of the eternal. He believed that men could grow, grow better, grow into the life of God. He put no limits to their development save the limits of their faith. He used to say to them again and again, "All things are possible to them that believe." he interpreted religion in terms of the knowlege of God, which to him was life eternal. "This is life eternal that they may know thee the only true God."

In every word that he spoke this great saying is very implicit-"I have come that they may have life and that they may have it to the full."

today

II. What the world needs most of all today is to hearken to and obey the gospel of Life. We do not half be

1. We do not half believe in life.

We teach our arts and sciences as tho we were mere onlookers as it were, to be dictated to, to be browbeaten by them. We have gone into slavery to things.! The arts and sciences could not exist apart from universal life and human life and self-consciousness. The arts and sciences should be made to serve us and not allowed to become our masters. They should not be allowed to destroy life but should be made to support life.

2. The basis of our every-day morality is far too shallow and insecure. Morality has more to do than conduct between man and man.

If a man stands by my side and there is nothing behind us or nothing within us or nothing ahead of us, save that we stand on the same ground near to each other, I may regard him as my rival or enemy or friend accouring to my whim whims or to my interests. No, no, I cannot get down to a right basis that way. Morals need a deeper foundation than that, a wider sweep. I want a universe. I want some kind of belief in the ultimate meaning of things, even to settle for me how I am to treat my fellow man. Our attitude toward God and Universal Life largely determines our moral conduct.

3. We are surrendering ourselves far too much to massed movements, to great organized systems. The tides of life are being stemmed by them.

"Thou shalt not break step, thou shalt not get out of line" is thundering around the world. Bolshivism, naziism, dictatorship!

Their combined thrust is powerful, no one can deny, they have distinctiveness of objective, noone can deny, but any red-blooded man ought to deny that there is fulness of life in them! We cannot surrender like that.

Conclusion:

Life! Christ came to make us more fully alive. Our mortal bodies are yet the temples of the living God. We must will to live. We must believe in life. If we are to follow Christ we must not surrender to anybody or to any thing, not even to government or church or the fear of d ath or to bad temper, not to anything that defiles the fountain of life within our souls.

Of course we are to be loyal to our institutions but we are not to be their slaves.

Many people ready to get under cover of some institution or system in which they will have to do no thinking or planning. But that is cowardly. There is not an institution in the world, never has been nor ever will be, whether government or church or what-not, that can afford to be exempted from the right of its own people to question and challenge it.

The sheep must go out to find pasture as well as come in to find security. We must live the abundant life. Christ came to set us in tune with the Infinite God, in harmony with all men and with all creation. Once to a boubting disciple Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." These words are vitality, they are reality.

The Way- you may begin to tread it. The Truth- you may begin to explore it. The Life- you may begin to believe it and live it. Are you willing?

Right now to you and to me Jesus issaying, yes, the ever-present Living Lord is saying, "I have come that you may have life and that you may have it abundantly."